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Evaluation

Management response to the evaluation of the second regional cooperation framework for Latin America and the Caribbean (2001-2007)*

Context, background and findings

1. The present document constitutes the response of UNDP management to the report of the independent evaluation of the UNDP second regional cooperation framework for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2001-2005. The framework was approved by the UNDP Executive Board in July 2000 and subsequently extended for two one-year periods through 2007, in order to synchronize with corporate multi-year funding framework (MYFF) 2004-2007. The evaluation was commissioned by the UNDP Evaluation Office to assess the overall programme performance and outcomes of the second regional cooperation framework. A meta-evaluation of the framework assessed its strategic position, achievement of intended goals and results, performance of policy advice, knowledge management and capacity development activities, synergies and partnerships.

2. The final draft of the evaluation was structured around the customary evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. The findings of the draft evaluation have provided very useful inputs towards the formulation of the third regional programme for Latin America and the Caribbean (2008-2011).

3. Management was pleased to note the overall evaluation findings that (a) the second framework programme revealed significant improvements when compared with the first one; (b) the framework was a key instrument to provide technical support to country offices, and contributed through relevant proposals and regional and subregional analyses that were highly valued by governments, academia, non-government organizations, country offices, United Nations organizations and other regional and national actors; (c) The Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean was proactive and innovative in achieving ambitious goals in the generation of knowledge, policy advice and programme support; and (d) one of the most valuable contributions was a commitment to

*The compilation of data required to provide the Executive Board with the most current information has delayed submission of the present document.

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networks of scholars, specialists, trainers, policymakers and others, such that partnerships and alliances forged during the period were regarded as outstanding, resulting in a conclusion that no effort should be spared to institutionalize them. Management was also satisfied to note the finding that the framework has set some very important benchmarks that are often cited in major academic works and in major intellectual debates, having made significant contributions in the areas of poverty, democracy, and human development. Management further noted the observation that the Millennium Development Goals agenda has been successful, the Goals having been readily accepted and incorporated into policy initiatives such as national development plans and other pieces of legislation in many countries. Finally, management appreciated the general positive view of the results of the second framework, with many projects considered as relevant and able to contribute to knowledge management and capacity building in the region, and with financial resources considered as having been carefully managed such that much was done with the limited resources available.

4. Management has taken serious note of the issues raised and recommendations made by the independent evaluation. In the annex to the present document, which follows the standard template, UNDP presents detailed responses to each of the recommendations, and proposes follow-up action with time frame and responsible units specified.

Annex
Evaluation of the second regional cooperation framework for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2001-2007
(May 2007)

Evaluation recommendation 1 Keep the knowledge-generation effort applied to policy advice, integrating the concept of human development to other practice areas as a guiding framework. Knowledge generation is a significant goal of UNDP, and policy relevance of all programmes is important to the countries in the region. As each area-specific evaluation notes, integration of the human development framework into other areas will significantly augment the position of UNDP as an important player in the development world.		
Management response The third regional cooperation framework will focus on the knowledge management and sharing platform, in close collaboration with Bureau for Development Policy, the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, the Human Development Report Office and the country offices.		
Key action(s)	**Time frame**	**Responsible unit(s)**
1.1 Thematic workshops in main practice areas	2008-2009	RBLAC Directorate; heads of thematic clusters at RBLAC; Subregional Resource Facility/Bureau for Development Policy; country offices
1.2 Strengthen the knowledge management platform designed by the regional programme and the Latin America and the Caribbean-strategic results framework	2008-2009	Same as 1.1
1.3 Assign resources for knowledge creation	2008-2009	Same as 1.1
1.4 Develop useful regional knowledge for country-level use	2008-2009	Same as 1.1
1.5 Include specific objectives of knowledge exchange among country offices and national partners in the third regional cooperation framework	2008-2009	Same as 1.1
1.6 Work under a matrix-based system to integrate thematic and programmatic work under the human development approach.	2008-2009	Same as 1.1
Evaluation recommendation 2 Concentrate and limit the regional initiatives to areas of expertise. This recommendation is very clear. To date, the RCF has been characterized by great dispersion of projects and little focus. At the same time, areas exist where UNDP has demonstrated expertise. Given the scarcity of resources, it makes sense to attempt to narrow UNDP engagement to those areas.		
Management response The third RCF will focus on strategic programmatic areas such as the Millennium Development Goals, social cohesion and human development; democratic governance; environment and energy. These are areas of expertise and of interest in providing political assistance.		
Key action(s)	**Time frame**	**Responsible unit(s)**
2. Undertake annual review of programme portfolio with a view to discontinuing non-priority initiatives and ensuring focus on a limited number of relevant priorities	2008-2011	RBLAC Directorate; heads of thematic clusters at RBLAC; Regional project personnel

Evaluation recommendation 3 Enhance management of projects and programmes with clear monitoring and evaluation structures and mechanisms with a results-based management (RBM) approach. The main critique of this evaluation has been the absence of monitoring mechanisms and evaluation structures.		
Management response The second RCF included project monitoring and evaluation in accordance with UNDP established procedures at that time. The systems should be improved to fully incorporate RBM, including the recently approved monitoring and evaluation corporate guidelines.		
Key action(s)	**Time frame**	**Responsible unit(s)**
3.1 The third RCF is formulated under the RBM matrix approach	2007	RBLAC Directorate
3.2 Periodic reviews will be organized, including selected country offices and partners to review progress	2008-2011	Same as 3.1
3.3 Creation of a regional evaluation unit	2008	RBLAC Directorate; Evaluation Office
3.4 Training of regional managers in corporate monitoring and evaluation	2007-2008	Same as 3.3
Evaluation recommendation 4 Enhance coordination with global and national levels of UNDP, particularly with country offices. Each area examined in the evaluation noted the recurrent problems of coordination between the three levels. It is clear that this must be an overarching goal of all future RCFs.		
Management response The global programme has had small and discontinuous initiatives in the Latin America and the Caribbean region. The country cooperation framework and its priorities form the basis for coordination at the national level. Improvements should be made, particularly in regional programme formulation, at all levels.		
Key action(s)	**Time frame**	**Responsible unit(s)**
4.1 Design a common framework of work between global and regional levels within the thematic framework of the RCF III.	2007-2008	RBLAC Directorate; heads of thematic clusters; regional project personnel; resident representatives and country offices; BDP (including SURF); BCPR; HDRO
4.2 Periodic consultations and updates to align the regional and the national initiatives.	2008-2011	Same as 4.2
4.3 When appropriate, establish programme and project steering committees.	2008-2011	Same as 4.2
4.4 Strengthen or establish thematic networks	2007-2011	Same as 4.2
Evaluation recommendation 5 Increase collaboration and coordination with regional institutions and with other United Nations organizations regionally. This evaluation notes that the second RCF was able to promote and develop significant relationships with other regional institutions. Yet it was also the case that these relationships are incipient and require significant work to make them effective. A similar situation exists internally, where the potential for collaboration and coordination with other United Nations organizations is enormous.		
Management response Partnerships with regional institutions will be strengthened. Coordination will be enhanced through the common country assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework at the national level; regular programming meetings of United Nations organizations at the regional level; the MDG focus and priorities agreed upon by all United Nations organizations in the region; and implementation of United Nations reform.		

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)
5.1 Activities related to regional-level follow up to United Nations reform.	2008-2011	RBLAC Directorate; Regional United Nations System Support Unit, Latin America and the Caribbean
5.2 Creation of common projects and programmes with other United Nations organizations.	2008-2011	Same as 5.1
5.3 Coordination with other actors through memorandums of understanding and similar agreements, which will serve as frameworks for thematic coordination.	2008-2011	Same as 5.1
Evaluation recommendation 6 **Structure the projects and initiatives of the new RCF around the achievement of the MDGs. This recommendation is self-evident, given the overwhelming focus of the United Nations system as a whole on the achievement of those goals. The suggestion, more specifically, is that this objective ought to become transversal to all thematic areas.**		
Management response The MDGs are the normative framework that operates under the human development conceptual umbrella, providing the basis for the thematic work of UNDP. Under that framework, projects and initiatives within the RCF III will be geared directly or indirectly towards achievement of MDGs, including joint work with United Nations organizations, related institutions and Governments of Latin American and Caribbean countries.		
Key action(s)	**Time frame**	**Responsible unit(s)**
6.1 Explicit reference in project and programme documents of the links to MDGs.	2008-2011	Heads of clusters; regional experts; RBLAC Director
6.2 RCF III includes a thematic area that covers MDGs, social cohesion and human development	2008-2011	Same as 6.1
Evaluation recommendation 7 **Enhance national and regional ownership through broader consultation processes and follow-up mechanisms. This evaluation concluded that national and regional ownership of the majority of RCF projects was weak. Consequently, consultations processes need to be strengthened, and participatory follow-up mechanisms need to be developed.**		
Management response RCF III is being formulated through in-depth consultations with country offices, United Nations organizations, Governments, the private sector, civil society organizations, academia and other partners.		
Key action(s)	**Time frame**	**responsible Unit(s)**
6.1 Formulation of RCF III in close consultation with key actors and partners (country offices, national and regional partners).	2007	RBLAC Directorate; regional experts; resident representatives; heads of clusters; oversight and support team
6.2 Carry out a mid-term review with partners.	2009	Same as 6.1
6.3 Improve interaction between regional country framework and country	2008-2011	Same as 6.1

programme document.		
6.4 Involve partners in implementing components of programmes and reviews.	2008-2011	Same as 6.1
Evaluation recommendation 8 Given the diversification of interests within the region, a subregional approach is recommended. In several of the thematic areas, it is evident that a broad regional approach often misses subregional nuances. The next RCF should seriously consider an approach that can differentiate sufficiently to avoid the trap of generalizing efforts while missing specific targets of opportunity. At the same time, it should be sufficiently flexible to account for the dynamics of subregional patterns.		
Management response The regional programme will continue adopting sub-regional projects or approaches to respond to specific problems coinciding with the priorities of major partners in Latin American and the Caribbean. RCF III considers South-South Cooperation a useful tool for fostering subregional work.		
Key action(s)	**Time frame**	**Responsible unit(s)**
8.1. Project approach with focus at the subregional level.	2008-2011	RBLAC Directorate; heads of thematic clusters; resident representatives and country office focal points
8.2. Formulation of cluster strategies with subregional focus and priorities.	2008-2011	Same as 8.1
8.3. Preparation of subregional Human Development Reports.	2008-2011	Same as 8.1
8.4. Strengthen collaboration with subregional institutions on more focused attention to peculiarities of their development challenges such as the Caribbean small island developing States	2008-2011	Same as 8.1